

To the California Performance Review (CPR) Commission for its first public hearing at UC Riverside on Friday, August 13, 2004:

I am John Powell, Jr., President and CEO of Peter Rabbit Farms, a grower, packer and shipper of carrots and value added carrot products, and other fresh produce items. I am speaking today on behalf of the men and women who grow the food and fiber on which all Californians depend to support their daily living needs. We wholeheartedly support the Governor's effort to make government more efficient and less expensive. We believe in and support the CPR process as a way to accomplish that objective.

California's farmers and ranchers deliver *safe* food and fiber through *responsible* environmental stewardship in a *fair* marketplace for all Californians. But they currently fulfill that responsibility while facing increasing challenges:

- The number of Californians depending upon California Grown food and fiber is increasing;
- During a period of time when availability of farmland is decreasing (10 percent since 1990);
- Which is increasing California's dependence upon imported foods;
- Thereby increasing California's vulnerability to exotic pests and diseases (such as the Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter that threatens grapevines);
- While public resources invested in the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) are decreasing.

In order to protect our supply of food and fiber for all Californians, we must:

- Protect the natural resources required to produce food and fiber through water conservation, energy creation and productive farm preservation.
- Protect the safe and reliable delivery of food and fiber through food safety and security, pest prevention and efficient transportation.

Clearly California farming serves many different people and purposes. As a result, it is important that the outcome of the CPR process produces the increases in support required to uphold this awesome responsibility.

The CPR staff notes the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is "the model vertically integrated, customer focused, and mission driven department the CPR hopes to replicate throughout state government".

Therefore, a top priority for the CPR process should be to deliver a plan that articulately defines how to enhance CDFA's important role in protecting California's supply of food and fiber.

Since California farming serves all the people living in this state, we recommend that CDFA serve as the single source of contact and authority for issues relating to farming. Because above all else, government reorganization necessary to grant CDFA regulatory authority over all "farm-to-fork" functions simply makes common sense.

CDFA should have a seat at every policy table in every department, and ultimately at every policy discussion that would affect California farming.

In conclusion, California's farmers applaud your efforts to streamline government. We will have a representative at each hearing and will separately provide you with the written details of our CPR recommendations.

Thank you.